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JENNINGS: Despite all the attention it's received, the White House will still not say officially that President Reagan has signed a directive that allows for preemptive action against terrorists. Now our Pentagon correspondent, John McWethy, reports an insider's battle on how it can be implemented.

MCWETHY: Government sources tell ABC News there is sharp disagreement within the Reagan administration over how to interpret and implement the president's new directive on fighting terrorism. Administration sources admit while there may be a new directive, the government is still a long way from having a real policy upon which it can act. On opposite sides of the issue are Secretary of State Shultz and Defense Secretary Weinberger, two senior Cabinet members who have had bitter disagreements in the past over how to best employ America's military. Administration sources say Shultz favors an aggressive interpretation of the president's directive, use of specially trained military teams to make preemptive and retaliatory strikes against terrorists anywhere in the world. Weinberger, sources claim, wants a far more conservative approach, one that would use these strike teams sparingly. Pentagon officials say Weinberger's reluctance, along with reservations by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, stems in part from a lack of confidence in the U.S. intelligence community, its ability to accurately assess threats and pinpoint targets before secret military teams are ordered to strike half way around the world. Since the ill-fated attempt to rescue American hostages in Iran, the U.S. military has been building a secret force to deal with a variety of terrorist situations. Elements of this force have already been dispatched to help foreign governments actively deal with dozens of terrorist situations overseas. Military sources say not once did the press find out about it, even when there were American casualties, as there have been, sources claim, on more than one occasion. John McWethy, ABC News, the Pentagon.